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OUR STEEL ENGRAVINGS.

PHILOSOPHY AND CHRISTIAN ART.

(Frontispiece.)

D. HUNTINGTON, N.A., Painter.

W. RIDGWAY, Engraver.



THIS engraving is from a painting by Daniel Huntington, recently President of the National Academy of Design. The painting was executed in 1868, and placed in the exhibition of the National Academy of Design of the ensuing year. It also formed a part of the American Art exhibit at the Centennial gathering two years ago.

The story which the picture tells is in some sort an allegory. The attention of an old philosopher, who is engaged in mathematical studies, is called to a picture of the Nativity by the female figure, who personates Christian Art. It is not the purpose of the picture to express any antagonism between Christianity and philosophy, but rather to illustrate the influence of moral over purely scientific studies. The painter chose a beautiful young woman pointing to the shepherds worshipping the infant Saviour, and suggesting the divine power of charity over strength of intellect. The painting is rich in colour and tone, and is generally accepted as one of the best of the works of the distinguished painter. It is owned by Mr. Robert Hoe, of this city, who purchased it before it left the artist's studio.

WAITING FOR THE COUNTESS.

Sir E. LANDSEER, R.A., Painter.

C. G. LEWIS, Engraver.

THIS picture was painted by Landseer in 1832 for his friend the accomplished Countess of Blessington, whose mansion, Gore House, Kensington—on the site of which, or on land immediately adjoining, the Albert Hall now stands—was in those days the resort of the fashionable world, and of very many men and women distinguished in the arts and literature. The original painting was sold at Gore House—when the Countess's works of Art, &c., were dispersed in 1849, a few weeks only before her decease—for the sum of 250 guineas, to Mr. Grundy, the dealer, of Manchester, from whose hands it passed into those of Mr. C. W. Wass, who

engraved it on a somewhat large scale. The engraving was published in 1850. The picture then became the property, by purchase, of Messrs. Agnew, who disposed of it to Mr. John Chapman, in whose possession, we believe, it still remains.

The graceful bloodhound lying at the foot of a flight of steps was a favourite dog given to the Countess of Blessington by the then King of Naples. The beautiful animal is eagerly watching for his mistress, and evidently hears her footsteps as she descends. Its head is full of intelligent expression, and, with the body and limbs, shows all the power and truth the painter imparted to such subjects with scarcely an exception.

THE TOILETTE.

AUGUSTE LUDWIG, Painter.

H. BURKNER, Engraver.

THE German school of painting is assumed to adopt, as a rule, a higher and what may be deemed a more sedate character of subject than any other of the European schools. The artists of that country generally claim to be academic, scholarly, and elevated; idealists rather than naturalists, imaginative rather than realistic. This was certainly the case with all the leaders of the school some years ago, and still is with a few who are regarded as successors to the great men who shed a lustre on German Art at an earlier period of the present century. But of later years there has arisen a class of painters who have been satisfied with representing the ordinary affairs of every-day life, as they occur in the home and among the household. In a word, Germany now produces pictures of *genre*, such as the Low Countries gave birth to in the seventeenth century especially, and such as have long been familiar to us from the pencils of our own artists. So far as concerns the composition, a Dutchman or an Englishman may have painted 'The Toilette,' wherein we see a young German mother, having taken her infant from the cradle and laid it out on the table, preparing to give the child its morning ablutions; and right thoroughly she appears to be setting about her duty, while the little one, unembarrassed by clothes of any description, and in all the vigour of infantile health, gives full play to its little rounded and chubby limbs. The picture is indicative of home happiness, just as the room is full of Nature's sunshine.

THE EXHIBITION AT LES MIRLITONS.



THE annual exhibitions organised by two of the leading clubs of Paris—namely, the Cercle Artistique et Littéraire, on the Rue St.-Arnaud, and that of the Union Artistique, known as Les Mirlitons, on the Place Vendôme—were thrown open to the public in February. The latter club is the most important and the oldest in point of organisation, and its walls display this year, as usual, a highly-interesting and noteworthy collection of pictures, including contributions from several of the greatest artists of France.

One of the most striking of these contributions is a large and elaborate work by Gustave Boulanger, entitled 'The Home of the Cadi: a Reminiscence of Algiers in the Olden Times.' It looks like an illustration to the 'Arabian Nights.' The scene is the inner court of an Algerian palace, surrounded with arcades, with rounded, graceful arches and twisted columns decorated with arabesques in faint tints of green and lilac, and with vines drooping over them in lithe festoons. Beside the tank in the centre of the court a group of the inmates of the palace are seated together on a rich carpet. The cadi himself, elderly and imposing under his high

white turban, holds his coffee-cup in his hand while giving directions to a slave in the act of filling his pipe, the dark-hued garments and dusky complexions of these two men forming, so to speak, the shadow in this brilliant glow of light and colour. Two young girls are also seated on the carpet, and are engaged in conversation. One is clothed in vivid pink, and her long, shining tresses fall in thick braids over her shoulders; the other, who reclines beside her, is dressed in yellow. Another young girl stands leaning against a pillar to the left of the spectator, and chats with a comrade seated at her feet. This figure displays to admiration the peculiar and characteristic costume of the women of Algiers. Full trowsers of crimson velvet, loosely confined around the waist, are gathered at the knee above silk stockings, the lady's feet being thrust into gold-embroidered halouches. Above this is worn a robe, or rather a loose cymar, of white, transparent gauze, spotted with gold rosaces, through which the tints and the contour of the wearer's form are very clearly discernible. A rounded velvet cap is placed well forward on her head, and is fastened under the chin by a throat-strap of gold-lace. She holds in her hand one of the square Oriental fans with the handle at one side, the edge of which

is set with pink roses. Another characteristic figure is that of a little girl, about six years of age, in a gaily-flowered gown, who is dragging about her doll in the background. A setting of splendid tropical plants and all the picturesque richness of the Oriental accessories go to make up a very brilliant and attractive scene.

Carolus Duran's 'Portrait of M. Leroy-Beaulieu' is one of the best examples of his vigorous but not always attractive talent that has been on exhibition for some time past. This dashing painter generally succeeds better with the portraits of gentlemen than with those of lady sitters, and the present work is, therefore, a very favourable specimen of his style. M. Beaulieu's pale, finely-cut features, profuse dark hair and dark beard, are relieved against a background of dark yet vivid blue. The chair in which he sits is covered with a bluish-green velvet, the combination of the two tints being admirably managed, and being further heightened by the dark crimson of the table-cover on which the hand of the sitter rests. M. Duran has also contributed another portrait, that of a boy of seven in a Highland costume of dark-blue and green plaid. The little fellow stands upon a fiery-red carpet, his figure relieved against a red-velvet curtain, a shade or two only less intense in tone. This juxtaposition of bright reds would be glaring and inharmonious were it not for the dusky hues of the child's costume. As it is, the effect is far from being either wholly pleasing or successful.

From the pencil of that youthful master, Detaille, we have two fine works, the most important of which is called 'L'Alerte' ('The Alarm'), and the subject of which has evidently been taken from the annals of the late war. The scene represents a village street in the early light of a wintry morning, the ground covered with plashy, yellow-tinged snow, the distances veiled with that pale, thin mist that forms the invariable atmospheric accompaniment of a mild winter's day in France. In the long perspective of the street are dimly visible groups of soldiers lounging around their stacked muskets. To the right of the foreground rises an old-fashioned inn with projecting upper stories, and a lamp above the door on which the word "Bal" is faintly indicated. Before the door a trooper has just checked his horse, and is telling some momentous piece of news to the officers, who hasten from taking their ease in their inn to listen. One grey-haired old general stands with his back to the spectator, his head thrown back in an attitude of rapt attention. A younger officer beside him buttons his overcoat hurriedly, while hearkening to the tidings with all his ears. A third plunges through the doorway with one arm thrust into the sleeve of the overcoat into which he is struggling in hot haste. Meanwhile the trooper tells his story with forcible earnestness. His rough countenance is instinct with the importance of his tale. His horse is smoking from the rapidity of his ride, and his nostrils send forth a thin cloud of steam in the wintry air. He has fallen in the course, and one knee is badly hurt and bleeding, and he rests his weight on the other foreleg with that dumb, unconscious pathos that one often sees in wounded animals. This central group of the horse and rider is one of the happiest efforts of the talent of the gifted painter. His other picture gives one something of the impression of a comedy after a tragedy. For it is a scene from the autumnal manœuvres of the French troops, a mere rehearsal for the grand tragedy of war. The great body of the soldiery is visible in the background, a group to the left are practising kneeling and firing, and a party of spectators have climbed to the top of a tall hay-rick in the foreground, the better to survey the scene. A scattered cluster of soldiers and peasants in the foreground is painted with much breadth and power, particularly the figure of a countryman in a very short blue blouse, who is carrying an umbrella. The scene transpires on a cool autumnal day, the sky being veiled with light, floating clouds.

Very *spirituelle* and delicately finished is a small picture by Delort, entitled 'A Visit to my Uncle the Canon.' A very young officer, dapper and graceful in his dainty new uniform, is walking in the canon's garden with his uncle, who is evidently giving him a lecture. This the young nephew does not relish, if we may judge by his drooping head and downcast eyes, and the impatient way in which he is twisting his whip. The contrast between the spare, austere figure of the elderly, severe-looking priest, in his long, black robe, and the young, fair-locked, and gaily-uniformed soldier, is very well imagined. In the background is visible the horse of the visitor, a spirited-looking steed standing before the house-door, and

watched by a trim maid-servant, who seems more than half afraid of him. Painted with a great deal of delicacy and *savoir-faire*, this bright little picture forms one of the most attractive points of the whole exhibition.

M. Gérôme's solitary contribution to the exhibition has naturally excited a good deal of attention—first, from the great reputation of the artist; secondly, for the oddity of the title ('St.-Jérôme,' by Gérôme); and, finally, on account of the subject, which is one widely at variance with the usual style of the painter. It represents a gloomy cavern, in the midst of which lies the saint asleep, and resting his head upon the broad flank of a huge, slumbering lion. The spare form of the saint is admirably drawn; but the lion is the chief point of attraction in the composition. The attitude and expression of the great, massive head, and the pose of the limbs relaxed in slumber, the hind-feet curved in passive repose beneath the drooping hand of the human sleeper, are worthy of the pencil of Barye. The picture is dark and subdued in colour, its dusky shadows and pale flesh-tints being only relieved by the halo of green light that encircles St.-Jérôme's head, and which looks very unlike anything ærial or supernatural, bearing as it does a very strong resemblance to a mere commonplace green hoop, such as young girls used to play at the graces with. But, apart from this minute defect, the picture is a powerful work, giving evidence of the singular versatility of Gérôme's talent.

Berne-Bellecour has sent two charming little pictures, one of which is very much in the style of his brother-in-law Vibert. It is entitled 'After Breakfast,' but I should rather have called it A Dainty Dessert. A dashing officer in a gay uniform of green and crimson has been breakfasting with a lady in pleasant rustic fashion beneath the shadow of a group of trees. The repast ended, the lady, who is a sweet-looking maiden in a yellow gown cut after the short-waisted fashion of the days of the Regency, stands on the top of a flight of steps leading into the house, and shyly kisses the forehead of her companion, who, with his napkin dangling from his hands clasped behind his back, leans forward to receive this chaste salute. His other contribution represents two sharpshooters in the shelter of an earthwork, and is painted with much of the strength and vivid truthfulness of detail that characterised his 'Dernier Coup de Canon.'

Some very good portraits adorn this present exhibition. Besides the Carolus Duran before mentioned, we remark a charming little full-length, by Leloir, representing M. Coquelin the elder in the character of 'Le Luthier de Crémorne,' a small, highly-finished work, an admirable likeness, and a very attractive picture. M. Émile Lévy's portrait of a young man is one of the most remarkable in the exhibition. It is a half-length, very subdued and even dark in colour, and the pale face of the sitter looks from the shadows of the background with a weird and sinister effect. The picture is a strong and characteristic one, and bears that stamp of individuality which marks it as a striking likeness. Jalabert's portrait-group of two young ladies in light summer dresses is very graceful and pleasing, natural in pose, and delicate in colour. M. Clairin has committed a daring act in attempting to paint M. Émile de Girardin after Carolus Duran had given to the world so fine a portrait of the renowned journalist. Evidently M. Clairin has tried to paint the Émile de Girardin of every-day life instead of the dignified personage depicted in the earlier portrait. But he has not succeeded, for his small full-length of M. de Girardin, lounging about with his hands in his pockets, his head on one side, and a quizzical smile on his features, looks less like the small, spare, keen journalist and politician than some good, jovial *bourgeois* who has just cracked a joke at the expense of a comrade.

Gustave Doré has contributed two landscapes, one of which is a large-sized reproduction in oils of a little drawing which was on view in the exhibition of his collected works last year, and was called 'The Abyss.' It represents the precipitous side of a mountain, almost a sheer descent, the pines which clothe the foreground and stud the slope giving the measure of the distances, and thus conveying the idea of prodigious height. The ground, strewn with cruel-looking stones, seems only waiting to receive the crushed body of some rash intruder on the heights above. But the design was far more forcible and impressive in the drawing than in the oil-painting; for Doré's forte is *not* colour, and the peculiar crudeness of his tints comes out with painful distinctness in the greens of the foliage. The other scene, 'Les Dunes,' is a

group of sand-hills by the seaside, with a strip of ocean visible in the distance. But the most striking production of his talent now on view at Les Mirlitons is a small-sized group in plaster, coloured to imitate bronze, and representing Ganymede being borne to Olympus by the bird of Jove. The eagle has caught up the youth by the leather strap that confines his mantle, and the loose drapery of which trailing on the ground affords a support for the whole group. With broad, outspread wings and upward-looking head, the eagle hovers poised in air, while the affrighted boy stretches both arms upward in an attitude of terror. Thus the group in composition has the aspect of a long, tapering, inverted pyramid, of which the vast wings of the bird form the summit and the falling drapery the base—an effect that is at once original and striking. Less complex and, above all, less conventional in character than was his group of 'Night,' this new work does no discredit to the weird and powerful talent that found its best expression in the group of 'Fate and Love' at the last *Salon*.

Very charming is a small picture by Worms, entitled 'L'Addition,' his solitary contribution to the present exhibition. It represents the interior of a Spanish wine-shop. A bronzed and picturesque peasant has just finished his *consommation*, and the maid of the inn, a personable damsel in a gay, white-flowered shawl, has come to claim payment for the refreshments. Evidently her estimate and his do not agree, for he is counting the amount with great pains on his fingers, two being protruded and two doubled over. Meanwhile his pretty creditor looks on and laughs at his perplexity.

A very curious picture is the 'Lucrezia Borgia at the Age of Twelve,' by Maignan, rich in colour and original in conception, but the dolls, dressed as priests, bishops, and cardinals, that lie strewn around the pale-faced, yellow-haired child, coiled in her long, black-velvet draperies in a large, carved arm-chair, seem to lend an unnecessary touch of triviality to the subject, and one, too, that is inappropriate.

LUCY H. HOOPER.

FIRST EXHIBITION OF THE AMERICAN ART ASSOCIATION.



ABOUT a year ago a number of young New York artists determined to organise a society of their own. Meetings were frequently held for this purpose, and the small coterie who led in the formation of the new Art Association were joined by several of the most prominent of our painters. Day by day the society gained in importance, and, though the active members are residents of New York, it had the sympathy of the best of the American artists in Europe.

The idea of the society was to encourage all good work from whatever source it came, and, in short, to give as little opportunity as possible for prejudice either in regard to the school of Art or the class of pictures. American painters who had never been abroad, and who were free from traditional ideas of the great masters, were to be represented; Munich painters were to have a chance to have their merits recognised; and the French-American students and English-American painters would stand side by side on an equal footing. The American Art Association became as strong and positive in Munich or in Paris as at home, for the artists there were equally sure as the New York artists themselves of having a proper recognition.

We do not know nor pretend to give any history of this branching off from the parent-stalk of the National Academy; but as such offshoots have always sprung up in all histories of Art societies, so this one may be considered a natural growth in the general order of things. Whispers have been heard from time to time of the coming "exhibition;" that it was to be a great artistic "event;" that the "artists abroad were working very hard for it;" and other similar remarks. Now the exhibition is open to the public, and all have a chance to judge for themselves of the merits of the pictures. We are not among those who believe that, because things are new they must therefore be an improvement on the old. Things often have new names which are but masks to cover up their old faces.

Last year the Grosvenor Gallery Exhibition in London was undoubtedly a new and it was certainly a very interesting departure in English art. There were strange paintings by Byrne Jones; Whistler had "nocturnes" and "symphonies" of colour; and "pre-Raphaelites" and "impressionists" showed us strange subjects strangely interpreted. In one of Byrne Jones's pictures, long-limbed, fair women made a peculiar kaleidoscope of colour, with their sweet faces doubled by reflection in a mirror of water into which they were gazing, and we did not know in 'The Days of the Creation,' the six pictures by Mr. Jones, whether he meant them to look like tapestry embroidery, like stained glass, or like oil-paintings. One thing was sure, he meant them for decorations, and he succeeded in producing his effect. But the Art Association, which is now named the Society of American Artists, has no such idea of the development of idiosyncrasy, and therefore, though it may attract less attention on this account, it seems to stand on a firmer basis as solid art.

The pictures at Kurtz's Gallery number about one hundred and twenty, and the collection is consequently so small that it can be easily and pleasantly examined in one visit. A unique impression is made as the visitor first glances about the room, when he finds himself surrounded, here by a canvas or two straight out of the *Salon*; and the walls of that exhibition are brought vividly to his mind by a class of subjects which powerfully recall the Life-Room of the Beaux-Arts, and the exhibition for the Prix de Rome.

A slight turn of the head, and he feels himself confronted by the Munich painters with their peculiarities of style; the greyish-black half-tints, the big, square touches of the paint-brush, or by the delicate drawing and use of the palette which take the mind to Vanduyck. Here appears the thought of Corot; there of Diaz; and we know as we look that, had it not been for the influence of Bonnat or Couture, certain paintings we see would not be in existence. Whistler himself is here in his work, but his picture was painted before he worked in the "nocturnes" of gold or silver.

But by degrees the mind settles down, and the first impression of the great variety of styles wears away; we look at the exhibition for its own sake, and, as we note what a picked collection it is, we say, on reflection, what we felt on our first entrance, that the idea of the society is a good one, and the exhibition a success. That it is the greatest artistic success that has ever been in New York, as some have said, we do not believe, nor that the pictures are a great deal better, nor in fact any better, than the good ones at the Academy Exhibitions; but there are few or no bad paintings, and each one represents some school well, and a few represent the individuality of the artists.

We shall first speak of the individual work distinctively from the style of any school, because it seems to us that it is only when his method is subordinate to himself that the artist is really full grown.

There are three American pictures that have claims to the first place in the collection: 'An Old Orchard near the Sea,' by R. Swain Gifford; 'A Canal in Holland,' by Samuel Colman; and Mr. William M. Chase's 'Ready for the Ride.' These are all masterly works, and add to a consummate *technique* such a brilliant artistic conception that the eye and the imagination are at once pleased and satisfied. And first of Mr. Gifford's picture: The canvas is quite a large one—three or four feet long and rather narrow. A grey sky, light and full of sparkle, overarches a long, narrow blue line of distant sea, whose white rollers, as they come in upon some points of headland, mark its boundary to the land. By a gentle rise, the low shore slopes up into a grassy dry meadow, and on the right hand is a straggling group of old apple-trees. A few gnarly red apples cling to the topmost twigs; but the trees are so neglected, so old, and so moss-grown, that they can never again bear good fruit, even if they have formerly produced it. A number of angular, straggling branches have been broken from the tree in windy weather, or they have been killed by blight, and hang half-way down against the trees. We can all of us, who are used to